

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T BEIRUT 4758

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR MILI IS LE
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON: LEBANON'S PLANS

1. WE ARE REPORTING MORE FULLY IN SEPTTEL DETAILS OF CONVERSATION WE HAD WITH ERSKINE, SAUNDERS, AIME AND TUENI AFTERNOON AUGUST 16. I SUBSEQUENTLY HAD TETE-A-TETE WITH TUENI IN ORDER GET CLEARER PICTURE OF EXACTLY WHAT HE HAS IN MIND. VERY BRIEFLY TUENI SAID HE WAS SUGGESTING PACKAGE. LEBANESE WOULD BE WILLING TURN SOUTH BORDER REGION OVER TO UNIFIL FOR TIME BEING AND PUT HADDAD QUESTION ON ICE. THEY WOULD NOT AGITATE QUESTION OF GOOD FENCE. UNIFIL WOULD TAKE OVER ENTIRE AREA AND IF IT CHOSE TO LEAVE GOOD FENCE OPEN, THAT WOULD BE ITS AFFAIR. IN EXCHANGE ISRAELIS WOULD WITHDRAW FROM AREA AND CEASE EXERCISING HEGEMONY OVER IT. HE THOUGHT TIMING WAS PROPITIOUS. ISRAELIS HAD GIVEN FORMAL CONSENT TO ENTRY LEBANESE FORCE IN THE SOUTH. THEY HAD BROUGHT UP QUESTION OF REAFFIRMING ARMISTICE AGREEMENT AND, UNDER PRESSURE OF CAMP DAVID, THEY MIGHT BE PREPARED SHOW FLEXIBILITY, PARTICULARLY IF LEBANESE AND UNIFIL COULD GIVE THEM ASSURANCES OF SECURITY OF BORDER AREA.

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2. TUENI SAID EXACTLY HOW TO GO ABOUT THIS WAS NOT YET CLEAR, BUT LEBANESE WOULD BE TRYING TO WORK OUT A PLAN OF ACTION. HE THOUGHT VISIT BY URQUART WOULD BE VERY USEFUL ADJUNCT TO LEBANESE EFFORTS. LEBANESE WOULD ALSO EXPECT US TO SUPPORT THEM.

3. I ASKED HIM ABOUT TIMING AND TUENI SAID LEBANESE WANTED

TO THINK THINGS OVER FOR A FEW DAYS BEFORE PROCEEDING. HE
WOULD HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT THEY WOULD SEE SOME SIGN OF PROGRESS
BEFORE SEPTEMBER 19. ALTERNATIVE TO PROGRESS WOULD BE SECURITY
COUNCIL SESSION WHICH WOULD EMBARRASS EVERYBODY AND WHICH
GOL DID NOT WANT, BUT WHICH WOULD EMBARRASS ISRAELIS MORE THAN
IT WOULD LEBANESE. IF IT CAME TO THAT, WE COULD BE SURE
LEBANESE WOULD TAKE VERY STRONG STAND AGAINST ISRAELIS
AND THAT THEY WOULD HAVE A GOOD CASE.
PARKER

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NNN

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